

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2311

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UK, XE, XO, XD
SUBJECT: CODEL WOLFF BRIEFING AT UK FOREIGN OFFICE

1. CODEL WOLFF WAS GIVEN A BRIEFING ON THE SECURITY OF EAST ASIA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN BY THE FCO ON JANUARY 21. THE BRITISH TEAM WAS LED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MURRAY, WITH FOUR FCO DEPARTMENT HEADS ASSISTING HIM (MESSRS WILBERFORCE, STEWART, HOLLOWAY, AND MELHUISH).

2. MURRAY LED OFF BY REVIEWING THE LONG-DRAWN-OUT WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH MILITARY AND NAVAL POWER FROM ASIA, NOTING THAT PRESENT BRITISH FORCES ARE LIMITED TO WHAT IS REQUIRED BY BRITISH COMMITMENTS. THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF BRITISH RELATIONS WITH ASIA INDICATES A POLICY BASED ON THE NEED FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND CONTINUITY OF POLITICAL STABILITY.

3. IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, THE EXERCISE OF NAVAL POWER IS NOT THE CAUSE OF TENSION AMONG THE COUNTRIES TOUCHING IT. THE SOURCES OF TENSION ARE ON LAND, BUT NAVAL POWER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN GIVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO OUTSIDE POWERS OF REINFORCING THEIR POLITICAL INFLUENCE. THE SHIPPING AND TRADE ROUTES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ARE OF IMPORTANCE TO THE WEST, AND WE THEREFORE NEED SOME WESTERN CAPABILITY TO COUNTER-
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BALANCE THE SOVIET UNION. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS IN NO ONE'S INTEREST FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN TO BECOME THE SCENE OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN US AND USSR FORCES. THE UK IS IN FAVOR OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR MUTUAL RESTRAINT SO AS TO LIMIT SOVIET ABILITY TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION. THIS IS A FACTOR IN THE IN-DIVISIBILITY OF DETENTE.

4. TURNING TO THE ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, MURRAY SAID NEITHER THE SOVIET UNION NOR COMMUNIST CHINA HAVE SHOWN MUCH INTEREST IN THEM. AS THE BRITISH GIVE THEIR ISLANDS INDEPENDENCE, THE BRITISH HELP TRAIN THEM IN INTERNAL SECURITY. THE ISLANDS ARE NOT PROMINENT IN SOVIET OR CHINESE GLOBAL STRATEGY EXCEPT TO THE DEGREE THAT THE CHINESE WISH TO COUNTER ANY SOVIET INFLUENCE. NO HEAVY SOVIET PENETRATION IS EXPECTED.

5. IN NORTHEAST ASIA, BRITISH INTERESTS ARE PRIMARILY ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL. THE UK BELIEVES THAT THE RESOLUTION OF THE STATUS OF TAIWAN IS AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR THE CHINESE PEOPLE TO SETTLE, BUT THE BRITISH DO AGREE WITH THE US THAT THIS RESOLUTION SHOULD BE PEACEFUL. MURRAY CONTINUED THAT THERE IS NO PROSPECT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF HONG KONG. THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UK AND COMMUNIST CHINA ARE GOOD, AND THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT IN HONG KONG IS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL BECAUSE OF THE LARGE EARNINGS FROM CHINESE EXPORTS. ONE THIRD OF CHINESE EXPORTS PASS THROUGH HONG KONG.

6. ON SOUTHEAST ASIA, MURRAY NOTED THAT AFTER THE FALL OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE

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AREA WERE DEEPLY TROUBLED, BUT INSTEAD OF TRYING TO FORM MILITARY ALLIANCES OR REPLACE SEATO, THEIR IMMEDIATE AND INSTINCTIVE REACTION WAS TO STRENGTHEN ASEAN. THE UK FOUND THIS ENCOURAGING, AND CONSIDERS ASEAN TO BE THE LARGEST SINGLE FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. ITS VIGOR IS INCREASING. ACCORDINGLY, THE BRITISH SUPPORT IT EVERY WAY THEY CAN AND URGE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EC-NINE TO DO THE SAME.

7. TURNING TO THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT, MURRAY SAID THE UK BELIEVES THE OVERALL TREND IS TOWARD DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY AND NORMALIZATION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, WHICH WILL PROVIDE CONDITIONS FOR IMPROVED ECONOMIC RELATIONS. SOUTH ASIA'S ECONOMIC RECORD IS POOR, EXCEPT FOR INDIA, WHICH IS EMERGING FROM THE RANKS OF THE POOREST. INDIA IS NOT A MAJOR MARKET FOR BRITISH EXPORTS, AND IS SEEN BY THE BRITISH MORE AS A COM-

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PETITOR THAN AS A MARKET. POLITICALLY, THE NEW REGIME OF DESAI HAS EXERTED INFLUENCE IN THE THIRD WORLD FOR MODERATION, AND THE WAY INDIANS RECEIVED CALLAGHAN DURING HIS RECENT VISIT SHOWED THEIR REGARD FOR THE BRITISH CONNECTION. THIS HISTORIC RELATIONSHIP EQUIPS THE BRITISH TO DEAL WITH SOUTH ASIA WELL.

8. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF THANKED MURRAY FOR HIS BRIEFING AND EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE COOPERATION OF THE UK MISSION TO THE UN WITH USUN. HE INFORMED MURRAY THAT HIS SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS WOULD LATER IN THE MORNING ISSUE IN LONDON A REPORT ON ITS HEARINGS ON THE SUBJECT OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE PRC. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF BROUGHT UP THE PROBLEM OF THE US TREATY RELATIONSHIP WITH TAIWAN, POINTING OUT THAT IF WE BROKE THAT TREATY OTHER NATIONS IN THE AREA WOULD BE CONCERNED. FRIENDLY NATIONS IN EAST ASIA HAVE INDICATED TO THE CODEL THAT THEY WERE DISTURBED BY THE PROSPECT OF THE US WITHDRAWING ITS TROOPS FROM THE WESTERN PACIFIC. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF ASKED IF TAIWAN COULD BE GIVEN THE SAME STATUS AS HONG KONG VIS-A-VIS THE PRC. THE BRITISH OFFICERS THOUGHT THAT THIS ANALOGY WOULD NOT WORK, BECAUSE HONG KONG IN ITS PRESENT FORM IS USEFUL TO THE PRC, WHEREAS THIS IS NOT TRUE OF THE US RELATIONSHIP

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SHIP WITH TAIWAN. HONG KONG IS UNIQUE BECAUSE IT IS

THE BEST PORT ON THE CHINA COAST AND BECAUSE ITS
ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERTISE BENEFITS THE PRC.

9. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF ASKED FOR A BRITISH ASSESSMENT
OF THE CURRENT CONFLICT BETWEEN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM,
NOTING THAT IT HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AS A "PROXY WAR."
MR. MURRAY AGREED THAT THE CHINESE ARE SUPPORTING
CAMBODIA AND THE USSR IS SUPPORTING VIETNAM, BUT
THOUGHT THAT THERE IS CONCERN IN BOTH PEKING AND
MOSCOW THAT THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE MUST BE STRICTLY
CONTROLLED AND THE CONFLICT ENDED IF POSSIBLE.
FINALLY, CONGRESSMAN WOLFF ASKED FOR THE BRITISH
OPINION OF THE FEASIBILITY OF REMOVING US GROUND
FORCES FROM KOREA. MURRAY REPLIED THAT WHILE THE
BRITISH SHARE THE DESIRE OF THE US FOR STABILITY IN
KOREA, THE UK IS NOT DEEPLY INVOLVED THERE AND HAS
CONFIDENCE THAT THE US WILL ARRANGE ITS WITHDRAWAL
OF TROOPS IN SUCH A MANNER AS NOT TO DESTABILIZE THE
SITUATION.

10. CODEL MEMBERS ASKED ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ON THE
INDIAN OCEAN AND OTHER MATTERS CONCERNING THE AREA,
INCLUDING THE STATUS OF THE NATIVE POPULATION OF
DIEGO GARCIA.

11. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN CLEARED BY THE CODEL.

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